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INFORMATIONAL LETTER #93-9

DATE: April 9, 1993

TO: ALL SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

FROM: Jean Schoonover, R.N., Chief
Bureau of Facility Standards

SUBJECT: Use and Location of Telephones

There have been questions raised pertaining to the use and location of telephones for the residents of nursing facilities. Following are some guidelines regarding the issue:

Interpretive Guidelines for Skilled Nursing Facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities states:

F187 Telephone:

The resident has the right to have reasonable access to the use of a telephone where calls can be made without being overheard.

483.10(k) Interpretive Guidelines:

Phones in occupied staff offices or at occupied nurse's stations do not meet the provisions of this requirement.

"Reasonable access" includes placing the telephones at a height accessible to chairbound residents and adapting telephones for the hearing impaired.

In summary, wherever this telephone is located, accessibility and privacy must be immediately, easily, and conveniently available. This area must be free from interruptions and residents must not have to obtain permission, negotiate, or schedule the availability of the telephone.

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If staff offices are used, they should be low traffic areas and the staff using these offices must meet the criteria mentioned in the paragraph above.

The telephone must be consistent in location and must be made available seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Jean Schoonover, R.N., Chief
Bureau of Facility Standards

JS/tm

cc: John Hathaway
Idaho Health Care Association

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